



Peta Murphy MP
Chair, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

By email spla.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Murphy,

We write to offer a very short submission to your Committee's **Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm**.

We note that you have asked for submissions by 11 November, but as it happened our Board has in recent weeks been considering changes to our policy position statements. Our deliberations now being completed we can place our contribution on record.

In brief, our policy position statement on [Gambling and Health](#) (revised November 2022), urges the following policy change:

“22. A legislative ban should be placed on all types of gambling marketing across all media. This should include banning of sports sponsorship by the gambling industry. Additional measures should aim to restrict the inflow of gambling marketing on digital platforms arising in other countries.”

The policy paper explains our background evidence and reasoning.

We know that Australia has the highest levels of gambling losses per capita in the world, with losses worth \$24.9 billion in 2018-19, and increasing at a rate of around 5% per annum.¹ Gambling causes harm to the physical, social and mental health of communities, families and individuals. Moderate to severe problem gambling results in suicide, relationship breakdown, financial difficulty, mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, and crime.² Gambling particularly affects vulnerable groups in the community such as people from low socioeconomic backgrounds.³

We also strongly support the work of the Alliance for Gambling Reform, which is articulated in submission #48 to your inquiry and through the Alliance's other publications. The Alliance, and indeed many other submitters, offer you a variety of policy proposals for addressing the harm from gambling, and specifically online gambling.

¹ Office QGSs. Australian gambling statistics 1992-93 to 2017-18. Queensland Treasury; 2019.

² Productivity Commission. Gambling, Report No. 50. Volumes 1 & 2. Canberra: Productivity Commission; 2010.

³ Billi R, Stone CA, Marden P, Yeung K. The Victorian Gambling Study: A longitudinal study of gambling and health in Victoria 2008-2012. Victoria, Australia: Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation; 2014.



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We also draw your attention to our policy position statement on [Unhealthy Political Influence](#) (2021). We identify sectors and business responsible for “the promotion and operation of addictive gambling services” as a sector deserving of special regulation due to their influence over the political process.

PHAA believes that there are several legitimate legislative purposes which justify regulation of unhealthy political influence, including at least the following:

- the need to prevent corruption of public officials
- the need to prevent the perception of the corruption of public officials
- the need to make corporate influence transparent, so that debate on political issues is enhanced
- the need for limits on the capability of unhealthy business sectors or interests to have inordinate influence over public policy decisions, or over the outcomes of elections
- the protection of the interest of the community in sustaining a healthy environment, social equity, and public health, all of which are determinants of the overall wellbeing of the community.

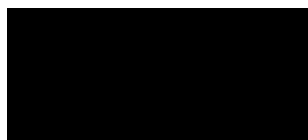
PHAA supports bans on all donations from specific business sectors for which there is clear evidence of association with harmful products, services, or industrial processes (‘unhealthy corporate sectors’), which most certainly includes gambling industries.

No doubt your Committee will sense the effect of this influence during your current inquiry. We urge you to deal with influence with the public influence uppermost in mind, and be prepared to reveal publicly any influence which you think inappropriate. We also suggest that your recommendations make a contribution to the work of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which is currently inquiring into political donations and other issues of corporate influence on the electoral process.

We know that public opinion in Australia appears to be firmly behind regulatory constraints on unhealthy business sectors making donations to political parties, or political parties accepting such donations.⁴

Thank you for initiating the current inquiry. We would be happy to appear before the committee to further elaborate on the public health implications of gambling if that would assist you.

Yours Sincerely,



Terry Slevin
Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Association of Australia

⁴ Miller P, Martino F, Robertson N, Stafford J, Daube M. Public opinion of alcohol industry corporate political activities. ANZJPH. 2021;45(3):283-9.